

The Buck Stops Here

Grade Level	Eighth
Minimum Time Required	45 minute
Materials/Resources	
Subject Area(s)	Guidance

Project Description:

1. This activity will teach students how to accept the consequences of their decisions.
2. Discuss what is meant by the phrase, “passing the buck”. It means putting The blame or responsibility on others. An example: “President Harry Truman had a famous sign on his desk at the White House. It read ‘The Buck Stops Here’. What did this mean?”
3. Explain that when people “pass the buck”, they are not taking responsibility. Ask the class why people “pass the buck” and ask for examples from their own experiences. Suggest that fear of consequences and a lack of self-confidence is the main reason the buck is passed.
4. Read the following situations, analyzing each as to possible outcomes and consequences if the “buck is passed”. Talk about the feelings involved.

Situation 1 – Two friends, Lisa and Cindy, are at the store. Lisa sees some earrings that she likes, and suggests that she and Cindy take them when no one is looking. Cindy agreed, but the girls are caught by store employees. Both girls have to go to court, and Cindy is grounded from her friends and activities. Cindy blames Lisa saying it is all her fault. Is Cindy “passing the buck?” If so, why is she unwilling to take responsibility?

Situation 2 – Tony has been saving his money to buy a car. He has found an old Chevy that he really wants and asked his father to look at it with him. His father told him the car had lots of problems, and that he wouldn’t recommend buying it, but he told Tony that it was his decision. Tony bought the car, and it turned out to be full of problems. He is mad at his dad because his dad will not help him pay for the many repairs the car needs. Who is “passing the buck”, Tony or his father? Why? Support your answer.

Situation 3 – Bill really has to study for an important history test. He is in danger of failing the class. Bill just doesn’t like history; he says the class is boring, and his teacher is always picking on him. Just when he begins to study, Jennifer calls him on the phone. Bill really likes Jennifer and talks to her for two hours. He never does get around to studying. He fails the quiz and fails history class. Bill is a “buck passer”. Who is he likely to blame for his failure to pass history? Who will he probably not blame? Why do you think Bill is a “buck passer”? If you were Bill’s parent, what would you say to him?

5. As a follow-up activity, students could be encouraged to bring in news articles or stories that appear to have examples of “buck passers” to share with the class. Discuss situations that arise at school where someone “passes the buck”.

Career Development Standard	Knowledge of the influence of positive self-concept.
Career Development Indicator	Describe how one's behavior influences the feelings and actions of others.
Delivery Level	Review
Academic Standards	
Language Arts	3.1.b Use various listening techniques in problem-solving and decision-making situations.
Employability/SCANS Skills	Basic Skills Interpersonal Skills Thinking Skills
Assessment/Rubric	Students will be evaluated on class participation.

Submitted by: SD Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program Model